



# Healthy Lifestyle Behaviors to Prevent Prediabetes from Becoming Type 2 Diabetes

## Overview

Diabetes is when your blood sugar, also called blood glucose, is too high.<sup>1</sup> Consistent high blood sugar levels can cause serious health problems. Prediabetes is when blood sugar levels are above normal, but not high enough to be diagnosed as diabetes.<sup>1</sup> Prediabetes increases your chances of developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and having a stroke.<sup>1</sup>

86 million Americans have prediabetes, and of those 86 million, nine out of 10 people do not know they have prediabetes.<sup>2</sup> Without intervention, 15 to 30 percent of people with prediabetes will develop diabetes within five years.<sup>2</sup>

The good news is that for those with prediabetes, some weight loss and physical activity can delay or prevent type 2 diabetes, and even return sugar levels to normal.<sup>1</sup>

## Signs and Symptoms

Before a person is diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, they almost always have prediabetes<sup>3</sup>. There are no clear symptoms of prediabetes, so you may have it and not know it. Your doctor can perform a simple blood test to find out if your blood sugar level is higher than normal.

## Risk Factors

A person with certain risk factors is more likely to develop prediabetes and type 2 diabetes. These risk factors include<sup>4</sup>:

- age, especially after 45 years of age
- being overweight or obese
- a family history of diabetes
- having an African American, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander racial or ethnic background
- a history of diabetes while pregnant (gestational diabetes) or having given birth to a baby weighing nine pounds or more
- being physically active less than three times a week






## Early Intervention

Don't let the "pre" in prediabetes lead you into thinking it's not a big deal or doesn't require medical care. You can take action right away to help prevent, or delay, prediabetes from becoming type 2 diabetes. You can also reduce the risk of heart attack and stroke associated with prediabetes.<sup>2</sup>

If you do have prediabetes, you can prevent or delay type 2 diabetes by doing just two things<sup>4</sup>:

- Lose 5 percent to 7 percent of your body weight, which would be 10 to 14 pounds for a 200-pound person
- Get at least 150 minutes each week of physical activity, such as brisk walking

The Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center (NMCPHC) Health Promotion and Wellness (HPW) Department has tools and resources you can use to adopt healthy lifestyle behaviors that can potentially prevent a prediabetes or type 2 diabetes diagnosis.

- [The Link between Weight and Disease](#) 
- [10 Tips for Eating Healthy](#) 
- [Exercise Programs for Active, Healthy Living](#) 

Weight management is critical to getting and staying healthy. You can check out the [HPW Healthy Weight Toolbox](#) for additional resources and tools to help you achieve and maintain a healthy weight to prevent prediabetes, type 2 diabetes, and other chronic diseases.

## References

<sup>1</sup> National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. Types of Diabetes. <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diabetes/types>. Updated February 2014. Accessed September 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. About Prediabetes & Type 2 Diabetes. <http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention/prediabetes-type2/index.html>. Updated July 2016. Accessed September 2016.

<sup>3</sup> American Diabetes Association. Diagnosing Diabetes and Learning About Prediabetes. <http://www.diabetes.org/diabetes-basics/diagnosis>. Updated June 2015. Accessed October 2016.

<sup>4</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Prediabetes. <http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/prediabetes.html>. Updated August 2016. Accessed October 2016.